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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000668

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: C-NE7-01141: SULTAN QABOOS ADDRESSES NATION ON  
CYCLONE GONU

REF: A. MUSCAT 654  
[1](#)B. MUSCAT 638  
[1](#)C. MUSCAT 596  
[1](#)D. MUSCAT 590  
[1](#)E. MUSCAT 587

Classified By: CDA Alfred F. Fonteneau for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (U) On the evening of June 30, Sultan Qaboos delivered a televised speech broadcast by Oman TV to commend the country's response to the devastating impact of tropical cyclone Gonu (refs A - E). The Sultan stated that it was "the Almighty's will" that Oman experienced the powerful storm, which "proved ... the power of this country and the strong bonds and unity of its people." He declared that he was "proud" of Omanis and appreciated their "loyal, unlimited efforts and commendable noble stands" in offering assistance after the cyclone. The Sultan lauded the government and the military for their "efforts exerted in service of this content, generous country," and expressed thanks "for all brothers and friends for their noble and supportive stance towards Oman."

[1](#)2. (U) The Sultan conferred specific awards to a number of individuals in gratitude for their performance during and in the aftermath of Gonu. The highest honor, the Royal Commendation Order - First Class, was presented to Lt. General Malik bin Suleiman al-Maamari, Inspector General of the Royal Oman Police, and to Abdullah bin Abbas bin Ahmed, Chairman of Muscat Municipality. Fifteen military and civilian officials received the Royal Commendation Order - Second Class, while fifteen others were given the Royal Commendation Order - Third Class.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: The Sultan's speech ended much speculation on whether or when he would formally address the country regarding the cyclone. (Note: The Sultan chaired the June 11 cabinet meeting on cyclone recovery efforts (ref C), but did not deliver a message to the public. End note.) That he chose to present his address more than three weeks after the storm, and well after many Omanis privately began questioning the Sultan's apparent silence (refs D, E), demonstrates the Sultan's traditional determination to act when and how he deems best, rather than in response to pressure from others. Some contacts claim that the Sultan may have purposely remained in the background following the cyclone so that Omanis would look to government institutions, rather than the palace, for assistance and guidance.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment continued: As expected, the local press praised the Sultan's address. Arabic daily "Oman," for example, hailed the Sultan's "fatherly" speech for recognizing and fostering continued "national solidarity" as the country worked to recover from Gonu. Internet chatrooms, however, were virtually silent on the address. One contact opined that Omanis were "no longer very interested" in what the Sultan had to say as his speech came so long after the storm.

